



Your **Guide to
Understanding
and Enjoying**

POW WOWS

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INTRODUCTION



The following pages include a collection of information which is intended to help the reader better understand and enjoy the events and activities which occur at many of the plains area pow wows and celebrations. Because the customs, rules and regulations may vary from one celebration to another, the booklet should serve only as a basic guide and not as an authoritative directory. It is merely designed as a resource to help the reader to be more knowledgeable and better able to understand and enjoy the history, events, activities and planning of a pow wow. Comments and suggestions are welcomed for improving future revisions.

The author would like to thank those individuals who have provided the materials, information and expertise for this booklet. This project could not have been completed without their help.

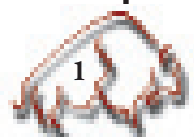
Developed by:

Murton McCluskey, Ed.D.
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Great Falls, MT 59405
(406) 727-1101
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Linda McCulloch, Superintendent
Office of Public Instruction
Indian Education Department
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501
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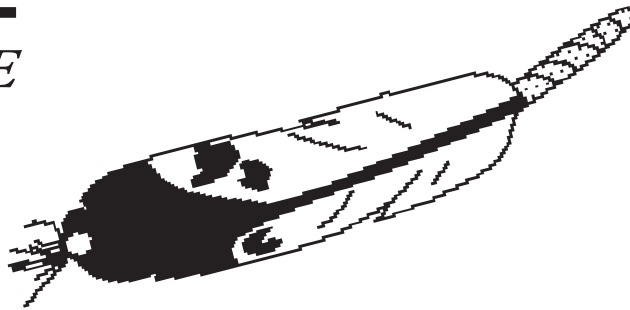
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HISTORY OF THE Pow Wow



A *Pow Wow* is a gathering where Native American dancing, singing and celebration take place. There are several different pow wows that take place throughout the country; however, this booklet will talk about pow wows in general and, more specifically, about pow wows along the northern tier of the United States.

Some reports say that the word *pow wow* has its origin from the Pawnee word pa-wa, meaning “to eat.” Other sources say the word is of Algonquin origin and was originally pronounced pauau, which indicates a gathering of people for purpose of celebration or important event. In any case, it is a special time for people to gather and celebrate, meet old friends and create new friendships.

In early times, hunters would invite their friends and relatives to share their good fortune. As time went on, while the meal was being prepared, relatives would dance to honor their host. Eventually, the dancing became the main focus of the event. Participants began to use this time to display their weaving, quill work and other finery. Pow wows also had religious significance. They were an opportunity for families to hold naming and honoring ceremonies.

Pow wows have changed over the years. However, they are still gatherings where Indian people can share part of their tribal traditions and culture. But they should not be confused with other tribal customs and ceremonies that are not performed or shared in public gatherings.

Pow wows have changed over the years. However, they are still gatherings where Indian people can share part of their tribal traditions and culture.

Today, pow wows, or celebrations, are still very much part of the lives of many Native Americans. In the Northern Area, the pow wow season can begin as early as March; from June through September several pow wows, also called celebrations, take place—somewhere—every weekend. Many families pack up and *go on the circuit*, camping out and enjoying the celebration activities, singing, dancing and seeing friends they may not have seen since the previous season.

A pow wow may have dancing and singing contests, “give aways,” encampments, feasting and other cultural activities. In present times, activities such as handgames (stick games), horse races, softball tournaments, parades, pow wow princess contests and other events have been added.

Most religious ceremonies are no longer part of the pow wows. For instance, naming ceremonies are now more often conducted in the privacy of a family; however, some small pow wows do



include naming ceremonies. Honoring ceremonies and ceremonies for a dropped eagle feather remain today.

Competitive singing and dancing for prize money is a recent change in the traditional pow wow. Prize money is awarded to top point-getters at the culmination of the event for both dancing and singing/drumming competitions.

The circle is an important symbol to Native Americans. You will see that at many large pow wows that the dancers are in the center of a circle, the drums and the audience form a circle around them, and the concessions and encampment form another circle around the gathering. This is symbolic of the life cycle. The pow wow brings the circle of people closer to their family, friends and Native American culture.

When you attend a pow wow, you will see children (tiny tots) as young as two or three years old in dancing outfits. You will also see elders partaking in the dancing. Although many pow wows have competition dancing for money, trophies or other prizes, not everyone dances for prizes. For many it is a time of celebration and to participate in one's culture.

Dancing was one of the first aspects of Native American culture to come under criticism by missionaries and the federal government. In the 1880s, the federal government forbade most forms of dancing fearing that all dancing was a form of war dancing. The ghost dance was especially feared. It was not until the 1920s that the Native peoples were again allowed to dance and practice parts of their religion.

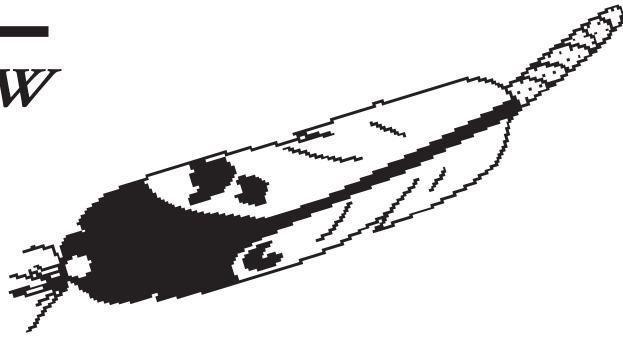
Many Native Americans have moved to the urban areas and, as part of their desire to maintain their cultural identities, have continued to hold intertribal celebrations. This gives them a chance to interact with Native Americans from other tribes, as well as expose their children to the culture. Many large urban centers hold traditional pow wows.

The pow wow brings the circle of people closer to their family, friends and Native American culture.

Many Indian ceremonial events, like the Sun Dance (Plains) or Hopi Rain Dance (southwest), are not open to the public, but most pow wows are. **Everyone is welcome.** Some, but not all, pow wows charge admission.



THE POW WOW COMMITTEE



Pow wows are not spontaneous happenings nor do they automatically occur on a certain date. Usually, they are the result of a lot of hard work done by many dedicated people who work for an entire year to make sure that the pow wow is successful.

The *Pow Wow Committee* for most pow wows is made up of volunteers, who may or may not be sanctioned by the tribal government or organization, but who are responsible for making sure all arrangements for the pow wow are made. They do the planning, fund-raising, publicity, set dates, make rules, set policy, etc. Members of the committee are respected members of the community and are usually able to get the support of the community in helping with the various jobs or activities that need to be carried out. To show their appreciation for the honor of serving on the committee and for the community's cooperation, the pow wow committee members, or at least subcommittee heads, will usually have a *give-away* during the pow wow.

*Pow wows are the result of a lot of hard work
done by many dedicated people who work for
an entire year to make sure that it is successful.*

HEAD STAFF

The *Head Staff* are usually the heads of different aspects of the visible operations of the pow wow. Often the Pow Wow Committee chair is designated as Head Staff. Other persons designated as Head Staff are usually the announcer(s), head or host drum, head man dancer, head lady dancer, head boy dancer, head girl dancer, arena director, head judge, (sometimes drum keeper, water carrier, etc.). Each member of the head staff has responsibilities which they are called upon during the pow wow to carry out.

JUDGES AND SCORING

The selection of judges is very important to ensure a successful pow wow. At some pow wows the head judges are selected by the Pow Wow Committee; they may also recommend singing and dancing judges. The head judges must have knowledge of the contest dances and the songs that will be sung. The head judges choose other judges (usually five) from the spectators, dancers or singers participating in the pow wow. Each dancer, at some time in his/her life, must have been a singer or dancer and be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations of the contest. The head dancing judge, or Arena Director, organizes the Grand Entry, chooses different judges for each contest session and makes the final decision on disputes that may arise over judging or scoring.

The head singing judge is responsible for selecting different judges for each contest session and settling disputes over scoring.

As each dancer takes his/her turn in the arena, the judges may look for the following criteria when scoring contestants:

- Participation in the Grand Entry, for which they are given additional points.
- Intricacy of the dancer's footwork and style.
- The dancer's ability to keep time with the drum. (If the dancer fails to stop on the last drum beat, he/she will be disqualified.)
- The quality of the dancer's outfit (note that the word costume is not used) and how the dancer presents him/herself.
- The judge will look to see if a dancer drops or loses part of his/her outfit, for which he/she will be disqualified. The dancer will also lose points if he/she is unprepared and not fully dressed for the contest.

The selection of judges and the score keeping methods may vary from pow wow to pow wow. The following are but two methods which have been used in the judging process:



Chief White Eagle and his wife, Pawnee, in their booklet titled, *My Pow Wow Manual* (date unknown), use the following criteria when judging and scoring—

The judges are very important because they are the ones who select the winners in the different contests. If possible, they should be selected ahead of time, so they can be told what is expected of them. Here are some suggestions for picking judges:

1. Judges should be Indians who know the different dances and who can understand the rules for judging.
2. Judges should not be related by family or marriage to any of the contestants. The judge should disqualify him/herself so the dancer can have a chance to compete.
3. My suggestion for judging for speed and accuracy is simple. Have each judge mark his/her card first, second and third. Give three (3) points for first, two (2) points for second, and one (1) point for third. Each judge should sign or initial the card. Do this as soon as possible and give the card to the Head Judge. An odd number of judges is best to lessen the chance of ties.
4. These points should be judged for sure, as well as other points that may be awarded by the organization sponsoring the pow wow.
 - a. The (outfit) must be authentic and complete—headdress, apron, moccasins, and bells or rattles. In some cases bells will not be worn, according to the custom of the dancer's tribe.
 - b. Any dancer losing part of his/her (outfit) will be automatically disqualified.
 - c. Any missed step (in) starting, dancing and stopping. In some places when the drum stops the dancer must have both feet on the ground; however, the local club will set the rules for the judges.
5. Judges do not talk to or ask questions from another judge, **and do not talk to or with any dancer.**



The United Tribes Education and Technical Center Pow Wow in Bismarck, North Dakota, (WOW, September 1980) uses a different method for scoring and judging. Their system is as follows:

The Pow Wow committee uses a six-point spread system that makes a tie score more difficult. If the categories being judged have four winners (Men's Fancy, Men's Traditional, Women's Fancy and Women's Traditional) five judges are used per session. The points used are: 21, 15, 9, and 3. The other categories have five place winners and thus have six judges. Points used are 27, 21, 9 and 3.

The dancers receive points according to: (1) timing with the drum, (2) outfit, (3) sportsmanship, and (4) both feet must be on the ground upon completion of the song and the last beat of the drum.

After judges pick the winners of that session, they record their numbers on their score sheets according to their places. The head dancing judge will collect the score sheets and will hand them to the scorekeeper. The scorekeeper transfers the scores into the official scorekeeping book.

Any dancer, singing group or spectator is permitted to see the score book after the completion of the dancing and singing contests (Sunday night). During the dancing and singing contest competitions no one is allowed to see the score book (no judges or officials). If a dancer or singing group questions the final scores they received, they may ask to see a copy of the judges' original score sheets.

The spectators may want to familiarize themselves with the scoring and judging system being used at the pow wow which they are viewing. This may make the events more enjoyable and exciting to watch.



CONTEST RULES AND REGULATIONS



As previously stated, different pow wows have different rules and regulations which they follow to govern their celebration. Some are old and have been in place for hundreds of years, while others may be fairly new and are in a constant state of modification. The rules and regulations have been included in this booklet to make the spectators more aware of the planning, order and intricacies that are involved in putting on a successful pow wow.

Some rules are old and have been in place for hundreds of years, while others may be fairly new and are in a constant state of modification.

The United Tribes Pow Wow in North Dakota (WOW, September, 1980) have used the following regulations, as they apply to dancers and singers.



SINGERS

1. All singing groups must be eligible for prize money.
2. All singing groups must be seated 10 minutes before the Grand Entry.
3. All singers will sing with their assigned groups only. No Drum Hopping. No Exceptions.
4. There will be no fewer than three (3) singers per drum, and no more than 10 per drum.
5. The decision of the Dancing and Singing Contest Judges shall be final in all events.
6. **Important:** Singers under the influence of alcohol or drugs will result in disqualification of that singing group for that session.
7. Intertribal Singing: All singing groups shall be required to limit their songs; 4-2 or straight 6. Should a participant use a whistle for a particular singing group, they will be permitted to continue singing.
8. Whistles: Participants shall be limited to three whistles per singing group or drum. Note: It is a tradition that individuals who use the whistles are required to donate to the singing group that is singing.
9. During contest songs, singing groups shall be required to limit their songs to 4-2 or straight 6, except for trick songs, which can be used except during the final dancing competition.
10. Should singing groups not comply with all rules and regulations, they will lose 20 points.

DANCERS

1. All Dancing Contest participants entering the Dancing Contest are required to register for prize money.
2. Dancing Contest participants are required to participate in all Grand Entries.
3. Dancers must be in full dress and ready to go 10 minutes before Grand Entry time. Points will be deducted for failure to participate in the Grand Entry; 20 points will be added for participating.
4. Dancers competing in various dance contests are eligible to sing with a singing group provided they are registered with that group.
5. Dancers must, at all times, keep in time with the drum beat. Bells must be worn.
6. Should a contestant lose any part of his/her outfit during the contest, he/she will be disqualified for that session.
7. Upon completion of the song and last beat of the drum, both feet must be on the ground. The body can be in any position.
8. Trick songs can be used, except in the finals.
9. No dancer shall dance under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This will be considered an automatic disqualification for that session.

THE GRAND ENTRY

Although pow wows may differ, depending on the location or type, the following is a system used by many pow wows throughout the plains area. Many pow wows use the following format:

First the eagle staff is carried into the circle, followed by the American, Canadian, state and tribal flags, followed by the title holders from tribal pageants. Other invited dignitaries are next, followed by the men: traditional dancers first, then grass dancers and fancy dancers. Women come next, followed by traditional dancers, fancy shawl dancers and jingle dress dancers. Next are the junior boys, then girls, in the same order as the adults. The last to enter are the little boys, traditional and fancy dancers, and the little girls, traditional and fancy dancers.

The dancers dance sunwise—clockwise—around the arbor, showing the audience that they are ready to begin, showing their *outfits* (the term *costume* is seen by some as derogatory) and their dance steps letting those who watch know who they are and what they can do. (Note: This may vary from tribe to tribe or Pow Wow to Pow Wow.)

When the Grand Entry song ends, there is a flag song, an equivalent of the national anthem. Then there is an invocation blessing the gathering. After that, the eagle staff (always positioned above the American Flag to signify the first nation) is tied to the pole in the center of the arbor or brought to the announcer's stand. A welcome is extended and then there may be a few words by various dignitaries. When this portion of the ceremony is completed, the dancing can begin.

POW WOW PARTICIPANTS

Dancers from tribes throughout the United States and Canada participate in hundreds of pow wows and celebrations each year. They come from every state in the Union and every province of Canada. At times, even participants from the Native tribes of South America participate. Some smaller pow wows serve as opportunities to gather during the winter months and may be more of a local event.

Dancers from tribes throughout the United States and Canada participate in hundreds of pow wows and celebrations each year.

Only registered contestants can participate in the dance contests, but when the announcer calls for an *Intertribal* dance, everyone can take part—tourists included. You don't need a feather, beads or bells; you can dance in your street clothes. There are no spectators at a pow wow. Everyone is

considered a participant, even if you don't do anything but lend your presence. Everyone has a place in the circle of people.

THE ANNOUNCER(S)

No pow wow is complete without Announcers. They are the orchestrators and motivators. They keep the Dancing and Singing Contests moving and keep the public informed about what is taking place. The more the announcer knows about the dances and songs, the better he/she will be able to keep the events moving and be able to call more specialty numbers. He/she may also entertain by telling jokes, making comments and giving directions. He/she also can set the atmosphere for the crowd and contestants.

ARENA DIRECTOR

This is the individual whose responsibility it is to keep track of the dance contests, singers and special events. The announcers keep the pow wow going in an orderly fashion and are very valuable in assuring a successful celebration.

HEAD DANCERS

The Native American tribes have always strived to present exemplary role models for members of the tribe to follow. The *Head Male Dancer* and *Head Female Dancer* are such role models. Individuals who exhibit outstanding traditional qualities are asked to serve in this capacity. The responsibilities of this position include being present throughout the pow wow activities and leading the dancers by being the first to begin each dance.

There are no spectators at a pow wow. Everyone is considered a participant, even if you don't do anything but lend your presence. Everyone has a place in the circle of people.

THE DRUM, SONGS AND SINGERS



THE DRUM

Drums can come from a variety of sources. Some are handed down in a family; others are donated to a drum group. Older drums are made of deer, elk or horse hides, but contemporary bass drums can be purchased or renovated, and even blessed, just as are the older drums.

The drum is more than just a musical instrument to those who own and play it; it has its own life. Some drum groups have gone through ceremonies and have had their drums blessed and named. The drum has its own powerful spirit. Gifts are made to the drum and some drums have their own sacred medicine pipes. In some traditions, the drum symbolizes the heartbeat; in others, the powerful medicine of thunder.

Regardless of the tradition, the drum must always be treated with respect as a sacred object or entity. Nothing is ever placed on the drum, nor does anyone ever reach across it. Many drums even have their own songs, which are frequently sung as a warm-up at the beginning of the powwow/celebration.

The beat of the drum is like a heartbeat, starting slowly and then beating more quickly as the singers get further into the song. The drum sticks connect the singers to the power of the drum as they sing.

*The drum is more than just a musical instrument
to those who own and play it; it has its own life.*

The drumming is judged in contests by the rhythm of the song. Usually the drum group is only judged on the songs they sing for the dance contests and on intertribal songs. There are many different rhythms and drum beats played, and each type of contest song requires a different one. The drum beats must be in perfect time, and each player must be in perfect unison.

The basic drum beats include the roll, a very fast drum beat, a slow steady processional beat; the Omaha beat, (the most frequently used dance beat 121212- the boldface numbers indicate the more forceful beat); and the social dance beat, which is strongly accented (121212) and ranges from medium to fast. (The drum beat that is heard in movies and old Westerns is NOT authentic.)

The *Host Drum* is picked by the Pow Wow Committee. They are the invited drum by choice of the Pow Wow Committee, and they are often called upon for special songs or ceremonies.

SINGING

Different types of songs are sung for different events—Grand Entries, dance contests and honoring ceremonies. Songs are made for all reasons. Although they differ in tempo, words and emotion, pow wow songs all follow a similar structure. The lead singer selects the songs to be sung for a contest. He/she may hit the drums once to let the dancers and other singers know the song is about to start. The lead singer, the first the people hear, will sing alone a phrase or a tune called *lead* or *push-up*. The rest of the group repeats the lead, this is called *second*, then all the singers sing the melody (first part) and a repetition of the melody (second part) together. One rendition of the song can also be called *push-up*, so if the announcer asks a drum for four push-ups they will sing the grouping of the lead, second, fourth part and second part four times.

There are three kinds of songs:

- all words,
- all melody (these songs are sung with *vocables*, syllables without meaning used to carry the melody), and
- those with vocables for the lead, second and first part and words for the second part.

Many times, at the end of the second push-up, four or five *honor beats* or *accent beats* are heard from the drum. Some say they represent gun shots. Others say each of the four beats are for the four directions, and the fifth is for Mother Earth and the Great Spirit. The honor or accent beats are a signal to the dancers and singers that another push-up is about to begin or the song is about to end.

There are songs for all occasions: honor songs, veterans songs, and war party songs, but many of the pre-reservation songs have been put aside in favor of the flood of new songs being composed. Some singing groups sing nothing but their own songs. Others borrow songs in addition to performing their own. The songs aren't written down, but tape recorded and learned from the recordings by singers and dancers, too.

Contest singers, unlike pop stars, aren't judged by the sweetness of their voice. In the Northern Plains, the higher parts of the song are sung in falsetto and the melody gains energy and rhythm as the voice descends. The sound is produced in the back part of an open mouth and throat with the volume and quality of the voice depending largely on well-developed abdominal muscles. Singers are judged on the range, volume, strength and expressive quality of their voices and the way they blend with the rest of the group.



Women singing an octave higher than the men may sometimes join in the latter part of each rendition. Women may also *trill* (a high-pitched sound made with the tongue) in special places in the song to indicate deep feelings such as joy, or appreciation of the song, or in honor of a specific person or event.

Drum groups have recently begun to win Grammy's for their recordings in the new Native American music category.

THE FLAG SONG

Many Indian tribes around the turn of the century adopted a song with which to honor the flag of the United States. The *Flag Song* has since been utilized by the tribes at the beginning of virtually all events in almost precisely the same manner in which mainstream America has adopted the Star Spangled Banner.

THE HONOR SONG

Note: Spectators should always stand and remove their caps or hats during an *Honor Song*. As the name suggests, *Honor Songs* are requested at the pow wow/celebration to honor someone. Perhaps a family would request an Honor Song for a son who returned from being away, or in the memory of a deceased relative. Honor Songs can be made for almost any occasion. In some traditions, people with an Indian name have their own songs and those songs are sung if the person is to be honored. In other instances, there are "generic" honor songs for people without their own song.

THE TRICK SONG

These songs are usually sung only for the fancy dancers and shawl dancers. A *Trick Song* is really a contest between the dancers and singers. The drummers try to fool the dancers into missing beats or failing to stop on time. Singers will either pick a specially-composed song or transform another song by agreeing among themselves when they will stop.

DANCES AND DANCERS

MEN'S TRADITIONAL DANCE



The men's traditional dance is just that: a traditional dance held over from times when war parties would return to the village and *dance out* the story of the battle, or hunters would return and dance their story of tracking an enemy or prey.

The outfit of the traditional dance is more subdued in color than the other dancers. The outfits are frequently decorated with bead and quill work. Traditional dancers wear a circular bustle of eagle feathers, representing cycles and the unity of everything. The eagle feather spikes on the bustle point upward, representing a channel between the Great Spirit and all things on earth. The traditional dancers are usually veterans and carry, as they dance, many traditional items that symbolize their status as warriors. Traditional dancers carry shields, weapons, honor staffs (used to challenge the enemy and decorated with eagle feathers representing achievements in battle) and medicine wheels (carried as a reminder of the wisdom of the four directions, unity, and for the cycle of all things in the universe).

The traditional step is done with the ball of the foot touching the ground on the 1 beat, the whole foot on the 2 beat. The traditional dancer's movements are patterned after animals and birds, like the grouse, and may be an imitation of the tracking of the animals themselves.

The men's traditional dance competition is generally divided into five age groups: 50 plus, men, teen, junior boys and little boys (nine and under). Dancers are judged on how well they keep time to the music, follow the beat of the drum and stop when the music does, with both feet on the ground.

MEN'S FANCY DANCE



The *Fancy Dance* is a relatively new dance. The brilliantly colored feather bustles are said to have originated in Oklahoma in the early 1900s when promoters of large Native American ceremonials asked dancers to beautify their outfits for the spectators. Also at that time, the dance contest for cash prizes was introduced and contestants started making their outfits more colorful as a result.

The Fancy Dance—danced mostly by boys and young men—is based on the standard *double step* of the traditional grass dances, but it takes off from there with fancy footwork, increased speed, acrobatic steps and motions, and varied body movements. The Fancy Dance is also a freestyle kind of dance. Dancers do whatever they can to keep up with the music! They, too, must follow the changing beat of the drum, stop when the music does and have both feet on the ground. The Fancy Dance competition is divided into four categories: men, teen boys, junior boys, and little boys.

MEN'S GRASS DANCE



Much has been written about the *Grass Dance*. Borrowed from the Omaha tribe, perhaps in the 1860s, the dance is very popular.

Dancer's outfits feature a good deal of colorful fringe, replacing the grasses dancers originally tucked into their belts. Many dancers wear the hair roach, the crow-belt, and the eagle-bone whistle—originally emblems for the Omaha society.

The basic step of the Grass Dance involves the ball of one foot being tapped on one beat and placed down flatly with the next, repeating the action on the opposite foot without missing a beat. Each time the foot is placed flatly on the ground, the weight is shifted to that foot. Dancers should keep their heads moving either up or down with the beat of the drum, nodding quickly, several times to each beat, or moving from side to side. The purpose of this action is to keep the roach crest feathers spinning. To keep the feathers moving constantly is the sign of a good dancer.

Although the Grass Dance is a freestyle type of dancing, dancers must follow the changing beat of the drum and stop when the music does, with both feet on the ground. The competition is divided into four categories: men, teen, junior, and little boys.

SNEAK-UP DANCE

The *Sneak-Up Dance* follows a definite pattern of drum rolls in the first half of the four renditions and a standard *Omaha* beat in the second half of each of the four renditions. On the drum roll, the dancers shake their bells and make gestures of either following or seeking out the enemy. On the Omaha beats, they *sneak up*, advancing toward the center and stopping on the last beat of the song, then walking back to the perimeter. The fourth rendition doesn't end as the first three

do, but continues with three or four straight Omaha renditions, so the song is actually sung six or seven times in all. The Sneak-Up Song doesn't have a traditional song ending, but ends on the word *manipe* instead.

THE WAR DANCE

The *War Dance* cannot function as it once did, but it is one of the principal features of a pow wow. Traditionally, the War Dance was a major event in itself that was performed after a battle.

As it was first performed, the men returning from war remained outside the village to clean themselves and prepare for entry into the village. The warriors then entered the village in a procession, each acting out his exploits in battle through dance. Through his movements of stalking and subduing the enemy, each told his personal story. Today, the War Dance is a demonstration of dancing ability and is a major contest dance category. The generous monetary prizes given for the contest encourages War Dance skill. The War Dance for the contemporary American Indian does not exclude women and is a main part of all pow wows for many tribes.

TRADITIONAL WOMEN'S DANCE

In the mid-1800s, when beads were acquired through trade, the style for women's traditional dance outfit was to bead the entire top of the dress. The design of each dress had a symbolic meaning to the individual owner. The dresses are decorated with ribbon work, elk's teeth and shells, among other things, and the dancers usually wear decorated moccasins, knee-high leggings, beaded or concho belts and various pieces of jewelry like hair ties, earrings, chokers and necklaces. Most traditional dancers wear or carry a shawl and some carry a hawk or eagle feather fan, or a single feather. This may depend on whether the dance is social or a competition.

Traditionally, women only danced to certain songs or on certain occasions and even then they were in the background. This is why the *Women's Traditional Dance* (relatively new as a competition category) basically consists of remaining stationary and bending the knees with a slight up and down movement of the body. At the same time, the feet shift subtly and women turn slightly. This is one form. It is also acceptable to dance slowly around the circle. Some traditions hold that this symbolizes the way women turned and looked for their warriors to come home.



At certain points in the song, women may hear words that have meaning to them. They may signal their pride and acknowledge the words by raising their fans. Others raise their fans during the honor beats of the song.

Women's traditional dancers must follow the beat of the drum and stop with the music. The dance competition is generally divided into four categories: 40 and over, women, junior girls, and little girls (10 and under).

WOMEN'S FANCY SHAWL DANCE

The *Women's Fancy Shawl Dance* is a relatively new addition to the dance competition. Until recently, women performed their fancy dancing in traditional garb. Some accounts say in the early 1900s, shawls replaced the blankets and buffalo robes young girls traditionally wore in public. In the 30s and 40s, young women would show off the shawls they made by doing some fancy footwork during the dances. Some say that was how the Women's Fancy Shawl dance was born.

The Fancy Shawl Dance outfit consists of a decorative knee-length cloth dress, beaded moccasins with matching leggings, a fancy shawl, and various pieces of jewelry. The dance itself is similar to the Men's Fancy Dance, and the style is moving toward more movement, especially spinning. Footwork is the chief element of the dance. Fancy Shawl dancers must follow the changing beat of the drum and stop when the music does with both feet on the ground. The competition is generally divided into three categories: women, junior girls, and little girls (10 and under).

JINGLE DRESS DANCE

According to one account, the *Jingle Dress Dance* evolved from Mille Lacs, Minnesota. In a holy man's dream, four women wearing jingle dresses appeared before him. They showed him how to make the dresses, what types of songs went with them and how the dance was performed. The dresses made a pretty sound to him. Upon awakening, he and his wife made four of the dresses. The four women who appeared in his dream were then dressed in the dresses. He brought them forth at a dance and told the people about the dream and told them that was the way the women were to dress and dance.

From there the jingle dress spread throughout the Ojibway territories. In the late 1920s, the White Earth people gave the jingle dress to the Lakota and it spread westward into the Dakotas and Montana. But until recently, the jingle dress dance had all but died out. Now interest in the jingle dress is



rekindled and women from many tribes are beginning to wear them. The jingle dress is not likely to be mistaken for anything else. The dress is made from cloth with hundreds of metal cones or jingles covering it. Often women use 365 cones to symbolize each day of the year. Jingle dress dancers must keep time with the music and stop when the music does with both feet on the ground. The competition is divided into two categories: women and junior girls.

TEAM DANCERS

Team Dancing is another relatively new addition to the pow wow/celebration. Generally, three or four members who make up a team all dance in the same style. They must synchronize their steps. Team Dancers are judged on their synchronization, their outfits, how well they look together and how well their steps are put together. Team Dancers, as usual, must keep time with the music, follow the drum, and stop when the music does with both feet on the ground.

OWL DANCE

The *Owl Dance* is a dance that can be considered as the Indian version of the waltz. It is performed by couples to the beat of a hand drum. The Owl Dance is performed at social events and all ages participate.

ROUND DANCE (FRIENDSHIP DANCE)

The *Round Dance* was in earlier times known as *The Dance of the Slain*. Women were the main performers of this dance, which allowed them to show their pride and mourning at the same time. Today, the Round Dance has evolved into a dance of friendship and is performed by all ages and is easily taught to tourists. Everyone is encouraged to dance by forming a circle and dancing in a clockwise circle. Dance outfits are not necessary.

THE CROW HOP

A unique form of dancing which has developed within the Indian culture is the *Crow Hop*. It has also been called the *Skip Dance* and the *Jump Dance*. This dance is part of the repertoire in every competitive dance function, especially in the Men's Traditional and Fancy Dance. (This dance is different from the Salish Jump Dance, which is a religious ceremony.)

This dance was developed in the 1900s and done with a specific rhythm of the drum beat. When the Crow Hop is performed, the singers find the music and drum beat easier to follow than the typical intertribal music beat. When dancers execute the Crow Hop, they have a feeling of exhilaration. The Crow Hop is a change of pace for dancers and is dramatic to watch.

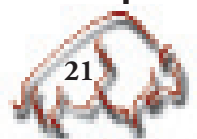
INTERTRIBAL DANCE

Everyone is welcome to dance in the *Intertribal Dance*—even tourists! It is not so much a particular type of dance, as it is a dance in which everyone can participate. (Note: this is not true among some tribes.) Intertribal Dancers move around the arbor sunwise—clockwise—and everyone is welcome to take part. You don't even need to be in regalia. You can dance in your street clothes. The basic step is the same one used by traditional dancers; the ball of one foot is tapped on one beat and placed down flatly with the next, repeating the action on the opposite foot without missing a beat.

Everyone is welcome to dance in the Intertribal Dance—even tourists!

THE BLANKET DANCE

The *Blanket Dance* is a means of gaining contributions from the audience for certain causes, (e.g., paying the drummers, a family in need, special programs, etc.). Sometimes a blanket dance will be held to give the spectators a chance to donate gifts or money to help defray pow wow expenses for a particular reason or person. The lead dancers hold the blanket, by each corner, and walk around the arena. The other dancers may join behind the procession. As the blanket is carried by, the spectators are given a chance to contribute by tossing money into the blanket. Please feel free to participate.



EXHIBITION DANCES

This event gives dancers an opportunity to exhibit their specific style of dancing. It is a chance for participants to dance for the audience without being judged. Usually, each category will have an exhibition dance. For instance, the announcer will call for all the men traditional dancers to perform.

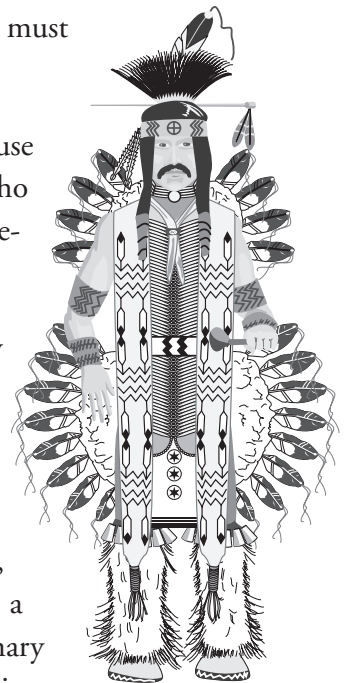
DROPPED EAGLE FEATHER DANCE

During the Eagle Feather Ceremony, regardless of the tradition in which it is being performed, spectators should stand and remove their hats. Picture taking, with still or video cameras, **is not permitted**.

To most Native Americans the eagle feather is sacred. So, when a feather falls from a dancer's outfit, the pow wow must stop and a special ceremony must be performed.

In some traditions, a fallen eagle feather is treated like an enemy because it is believed the sacredness of the feather can turn against the person who dropped it. The ceremony is necessary to capture the feather, ask its forgiveness and say a prayer over it to make the feather's medicine good again.

The ceremony is performed by four male traditional dancers, generally veterans (i.e., warriors who have earned the privilege) who dance around the feather. At a certain point in the song, they approach the dropped feather from four directions and attack the feather, usually four times. In some instances, the warrior who actually picks up the feather relates a battle or war story. For most tribes, four is a sacred number, symbolizing, among other things, the four directions. When the feather is retrieved, a prayer is said. If the person who dropped it wishes it returned, it's customary to gift the four dancers, the drum who performed the song and sometimes the Pow Wow Committee. Sometimes the feathers aren't claimed; in that case, the person who picked it up might give it to someone he thinks deserves the feather.



Different tribes have different customs. In some traditions, the eagle feather is looked upon as a protector and accidental dropping is similar to the American flag touching the ground. Some traditions simply have a veteran pick up the feather and return it after the prayer and gift.

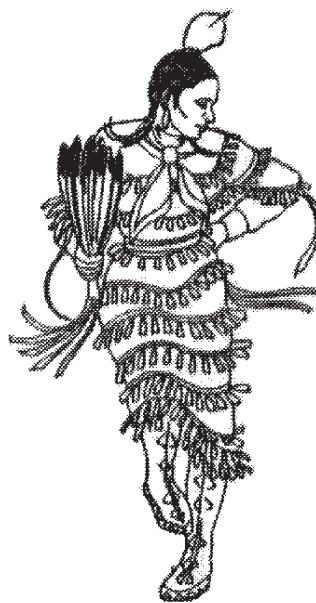
HONORING VETERANS

In a dominant Anglo society that often doesn't seem to pay much attention to veterans, the honor accorded to *veterans* at the pow wow/celebration can take one by surprise. Veterans are asked to be flag bearers, called upon to retrieve dropped eagle feathers and honored in a multitude of veterans' songs.

The respect shown to veterans is an integral part of the Native American culture, a tradition from times when the welfare of a village depended on the quantity and quality of fighting men. To be a warrior was a man's purpose in life, and the best death a man could have was to fall defending the tribe. To the Native Americans, the good of all outweighed the good of the individual, and veterans were honored because they were willing to give their lives so people could live.

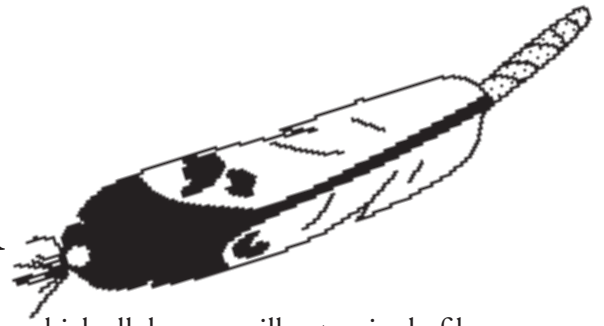
The veterans of today are accorded the same honor and respect as the warriors of times past, and, in some tribes, bravery is still honored as one of the four virtues: bravery, generosity, wisdom, and fortitude.

*The veterans of today are accorded the same honor
and respect as the warriors of times past, ...*



MISCELLANEOUS

WHAT TO WATCH FOR



- The pow wow will open with a Grand Entry, in which all dancers will enter single-file behind the Indian flag (a long staff with eagle feathers) and the United States flag.
- The Grand Entry is followed by a flag song. You should stand for this song as you would for the national anthem. This is followed by all dancers joining for several rounds of intertribal dancing. The contest dancing will follow beginning with the smallest dancers, progressing to the men's fancy dance. Dancers in the four main categories (Men's Fancy, Men's Traditional, Women's Fancy and Women's Traditional) may compete in a series of dances to decide the finalists.
- Rounds of intertribal dancing usually take place between the contest dances. Winners of the contest dances are usually announced after the judges have cast their ballots and they have been tabulated. If there is a tie, there is a *dance-off* to decide the winner. Some dancers can earn a considerable sum by winning throughout the pow wow season.

POW WOW DO'S AND DON'TS

Do's

It is permissible to take pictures during much of the pow wow. If you are not sure always ask, since taking pictures of some activities is not allowed. For example, during the Dropped Eagle Feather Dance the announcer will request that no pictures be taken, as during ceremonial dances, certain Honor Dances or during prayers. There may also be some individuals who do not want their picture taken. You should also be careful not to use bright or blinding lights which may create a problem for the dancer. There is no objection to photographing parades, intertribal dances and contest dances.

Be careful about getting out on the floor unless invited to do so. Although there are special times when the audience is invited to participate, there are certain activities in which only registered contestants are allowed to participate. It would be courteous for you to ask a pow wow official before moving around in the dance arena.

Check out the concession stands, food booths, arts and crafts displays, and raffle ticket

booths. Pow wows use rental moneys from these activities to help defray the cost of the pow wow. Your participation is always appreciated and you will enjoy the Indian tacos and frybread.

You need to be patient when the events do not start exactly at the time that is indicated in the program. It is sometimes difficult to get all the pow wow people and activities synchronized to all begin at the same time. Be patient and enjoy the atmosphere.

DON'TS

- Don't boo a judge's decision.
- Don't get in the dancers' way.
- Don't sit in the chairs or benches reserved for the participants.
- Don't film or tape without being sure it is okay to do so.
- Don't set up your camp without asking first.

THE GIVE AWAY CEREMONY

The *Give Away Ceremony*, or similar ceremony, is said to be universal among Native American people. Unlike other societies where one is likely to say, "Look what I did" and expect to receive gifts, in the Native American society the person being honored has a Give Away Ceremony and gives gifts. It has been said that the chief of a tribe was always the poorest in the village for he looked out for the good of all his people. Charged with their welfare, and honored by them, the chief gave away blankets, horses, food and whatever else his people needed.

. . . in the Native American society the person being honored has a Give Away Ceremony and gives gifts.

This event is often used as time when a family or individual can distribute goods or gifts to friends and relatives to honor an individual, someone's memory, an event or activity. Gifts may cover a wide range of items—from money to blankets to horses. The person may first be honored by an *honor song*. Some families may save up for a long period of time to be able to host a big give away.

Today, Give Away Ceremonies, either by people being honored or in honor of someone else, are common at pow wows.

MONEY PLACED IN FRONT DANCERS

When money is placed in front of a dancer, it is an honoring of that person by the person placing the money. The dancer is supposed to dance over the money to acknowledge the gift. After the money is danced over, anyone from the crowd can go pick up the money—or the Arena Director can pick up the money and give it to someone in the audience (usually an elder person will be given the money). Many times, children will be the first to run out and collect the money, so the Arena Director will shoo them away.

GIVING A GIFT AT A POW WOW

If you have a good time at a pow wow, you may want to enter into the gift-giving spirit yourself. You can write a note explaining why you want to make a donation to the pow wow and give it and your gift to someone at the announcer's stand. No minimum or maximum is required or expected. (*It's the thought that counts.*) Gifts are always welcome and can be used for the benefit of next year's pow wow.

If you have a good time at a pow wow, you may want to enter into the gift-giving spirit yourself.

The Pow Wow Committee may wish to make an announcement, and shake your hand in thanking you for your gift. You can ask to remain anonymous if you prefer. And, if you are watching a dance competitor who is dancing well and having fun, you might offer a gift to that dancer, or to a drum whose music you might particularly enjoy. Again, if you go to the announcer's stand, someone will be glad to pass on your gift.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

At the end of the pow wow, the Eagle Staff is taken down by veterans and a closing prayer is given by an elder. All the dancers then follow the veterans who are carrying the Eagle Staff out. The process can be compared to a Grand Entry, only it is a Grand Exit.

HANDGAMES (STICK GAMES)

Many Indian tribes throughout the United States and Canada practice some form of the handgame, also called stick game or bone game. It is simply a gambling game of hide and guess. Sides are chosen and one person will hide the two different colored bones. Another person, from the opposing team, is designated as the chooser. The person doing the hiding will try to confuse the chooser into making the wrong choice. The rules may vary from tribe to tribe, but basically, the team who wins the other team's (11) counter sticks is the winner.

THE 49ER

This impromptu activity usually takes place after the formal pow wow is over. The singers and dancers will gather at a site just to sing songs and share stories and good times.

POW WOW PRINCESS CONTESTS

A relatively new addition to the pow wow scene is the *Princess Contest*. Since Indian tribes do not have royalty, the *Princess* designation is in name only. The Princess Contest allows young ladies to represent their tribes, communities or cultural groups. The young ladies are judged on their knowledge of culture and customs, communication skills, poise and some sort of cultural talent. Winners are usually given an honored place at the pow wow, as well as considerable respect in their schools and communities. In some locales, the outgoing princess is obligated to provide for a give-away for designated honorees.

PARADES AND RODEOS

Other attractions at many pow wows are parades and rodeos. This is a chance for the community and participants to show off their outfits, regalia, animals, honored persons and programs. Many parades have horseback riders, floats, bands and dignitaries. Rodeos may attract top-notch cowboys from all over the Native American and cowboy world. These two events have become a very popular part of the pow wow scene.

USE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

All pow wow committees will not tolerate a dancer who uses drugs or alcohol when dancing. A dancer is considered disrespectful and disgraceful to do this. Most dancers also frown on someone who is dancing and drinking or taking drugs. If a participant is found to be drinking or using drugs, he/she may be asked to leave the grounds and will be automatically disqualified from the dance contest. Drinking on the pow wow grounds by members of the audience is also prohibited.



RESOURCES



- WOW, United Tribes Technical Assistance Center, Bismarck, North Dakota, Sept.1980
- *No Wind on the Buffalo Grass*, Friendly Exchange, 1981
- *Pow Wows in 1978*, Sunset Magazine of Western Living, May 1978
- *My Pow Wow Manual*, Chief White Eagle and Wife Pawnee
- *Pow Wow Country*, Chris Roberts, American and World Geographic Publishing, 1992
- *The Pow Wow; Development of the Contemporary American Indian Celebration*, Whispering Wind, Summer 1982
- *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Pow Wows, But Were Afraid to Ask*, source and date unknown
- Great Falls Tribune, May, 1992
- *The Native American Almanac; A Portrait of Native America Today*, Arlene Hirschfelder and Martha Kreipe de Montano, Prentice Hall General Reference, 1993
- *American Indians; Answer to Today's Questions*, Jack Utter, National Woodlands Publishing Co., 1993
- Reprints in Anthropology, Vol. VII, James Howard, J & L Reprint Co., 1977 *Pow Wow Calendar*, 1991, Box 490, Chimacum, WA

POW WOW CALENDAR

The following is a listing of some Montana Pow Wows, celebrations and cultural events that occur throughout the year. The dates are approximate since the days may vary from year-to-year, and in some cases, the celebration or pow wow may no longer be an active event. For further information regarding exact dates and schedules you might call tribal councils, cultural committees, school districts or the Indian education specialists at the state departments of public instruction. Some of the events listed below may not take place on a yearly basis, so please consult the tribes and organizations for further information. More information can also be found at www.travel.state.me.us/index.htm

Montana Pow Wows:

Blackfeet—

North American Indian Days (Browning)	2nd weekend in July	(338-7276)
Heart Butte Celebration	early August	(338-7521)

Crow—

Crow Fair Celebration (Crow Agency)	3rd week August	(638-2601)
Big Horn Reenactment, Custer Battlefield	4th week June	
Valley of the Chiefs Pow Wow & Rodeo	early July	(638-2601)
Chief Plenty coups Day of Honor (Pryor)		(252-1289)

Flathead—

Arlee Pow Wow	1st week July	(745-2700)
Chief Victor Days (Victor)	2nd week July	(642-3614)
Standing Arrow Pow Wow (Elmo)	mid-July	(849-5798)
Bitterroot Valley All Nations Pow Wow	late July	(363-5383)
allnationsmt.homestead.com/index/html		

Fort Belknap—

Milk River Indian Days	4th week July	(353-2901)
Hays Fair, Pow Wow and Rodeo	mid-July	(253-2205)
Veteran's Pow Wow (Hays)	November	(673-3221)

Fort Peck—

Wadopana Celebration (Wolf Point)	1st week August	(653-2915)
Red Bottom	mid-June	(768-5155)
Bad Lands Indian Celebration (Brockton)	4th week June	(768-5126)
Poplar Indian Days	late August	(768-3826)
Wahcinca Dakota Oyale Celebration	mid-July	(768-5186)



Northern Cheyenne—

New Year's Pow Wow	Early January	
Fourth of July Pow Wow	July 4th	(477-6284)
Northern Cheyenne Labor Day Pow Wow	Labor Day	(477-6284)

Rocky Boy—

Rocky Boy Annual Pow Wow	1st week August	(395-4690)
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Colleges—

Montana State University Indian Club Celebration (Bozeman) www.montana.edu/wwwnas/club/powwow.htm	early April	(994-3751)
University of Montana Kiyo Indian Days (Missoula) www.umt.edu/asum/kyiyo/	late April	(243-5302)
MSU—Northern (Havre)	mid-April	(265-2325)
Carrol College (Helena)	April	
College Great Falls Indian Club Pow Wow	late April	
MSU—Billings	late April	(657-2182)

Urban—

Last Chance Community Pow Wow (Helena)	late September	(439-5631)
American Indian Alliance Pow Wow (Butte)	mid-September	(782-0461)
United People's Pow Wow (Missoula)	early August	(728-2180)

INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL

It is the policy of the Office of Public Instruction to recognize, honor and facilitate the implementation of Article X, section 1 (2) of the Montana Constitution and the subsequent MCA 20-1-501.”

Article X, Section 1(2) of the Montana Constitution:

“The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.”

Although this language was established and placed into the Montana Constitution in 1972, little has been done to fulfill this commitment and incorporate it into educational agencies, including public schools. Many programs and projects regarding the public school system have been implemented in order to improve our educational systems and assure students are receiving a quality education. However, a quality education does not necessarily translate into a fair and equitable education. This specific constitutional language outlining the inclusion of American Indian heritage in educational goals has not been turned into action. Indian students still attend schools where they do not see themselves present in classrooms, policies, or the curriculum. Non-Indian students still attend schools where they do not learn about their Indian peers with whom they will continue to live and work with.

In 1996, the Legislative Services Division published a report titled To Promote a Better Understanding: The 1995-96 Activities of the Committee on Indian Affairs. This report derived from a resolution requesting the Committee on Indian Affairs to study:

1. the degree to which Montana’s public schools are in compliance with Article X, section 1, subsection (2) of the Montana Constitution;
2. the role of American Indian studies in the overall curriculum of the Montana University System and other institutions of higher learning in the state, with special attention to the teacher education curriculum; and
3. the level of knowledge of the general public about historical and contemporary American Indian issues.

The report set out to discover the legislators’ intent in including this language in the constitution. The responses from the legislators indicated that the purpose of the provision was to recognize the value of the American Indian culture and traditions. It was also to encourage the legislature and public schools to develop appropriate policies and programs to keep that culture alive through the education of both Indians and non-Indians. It was placed into the education article because the legislators believed that it was in the education of the youth that Montana would begin to make positive differences in race relations.

The study revealed that despite the constitution’s educational guarantees, many school districts and schools, including those adjacent to Montana’s seven reservations, had no policy or information

in their school curricula recognizing the cultural heritage of American Indians and that the small number of Indian teachers and administrators in public schools resulted in Indian students with no role models and in a lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity among non-Indian students.

In 1999, Article X, section 1, subsection (2) was again revisited, this time to outline the legislative intent and to implement the constitutional obligation. In MCA 20-1-501, the Legislature recognizes that the history of Montana and the current problems of the state cannot be adequately understood and the problems cannot be addressed unless both Indians and non-Indians have an understanding of the history, culture, and contemporary contributions of Montana's Indian people.

MCA 20-1-501

Recognition of American Indian cultural heritage—legislative intent.

- (1) *It is the constitutionally declared policy of this state to recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and to be committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural heritage.*
- (2) *It is the intent of the legislature that in accordance with Article X, section 1(2), of the Montana constitution:*
 - (a) *Every Montanan, whether Indian or non-Indian, be encouraged to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner; and*
 - (b) *Every educational agency and all educational personnel will work cooperatively with Montana tribes or those tribes that are in close proximity, when providing instruction or when implementing an educational goal or adopting a rule related to the education of each Montana citizen, to include information specific to the cultural heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians, with particular emphasis on Montana Indian tribal groups and governments.*
- (3) *It is also the intent of this part, predicated on the belief that all school personnel should have an understanding and awareness of Indian tribes to help them relate effectively with Indian students and parents, that educational personnel provide means by which school personnel will gain an understanding of and appreciation for the American Indian people.*

History: En. Sec. 1, Ch. 527, L. 1999.

MCA 20-1-501 is an impetus to move forward toward an equitable education for all students. It is now up to state educational agencies and local districts to take advantage of this new law to assure that Montana's non-Indian students are given the opportunity to learn about the rich heritage of their neighbors and peers and that Indian students are able to locate themselves within their schools.

Successful implementation of Article X and 20-1-501 is dependent upon the entire educational community, not just schools with high populations of American Indians. Additionally, the Montana tribal nations and tribal colleges must also take a more proactive role in assisting with

implementation efforts. Although it will take hard work as well as a thoughtfully planned and collaborative effort, we believe that equality and fairness can be achieved as part of a quality education. We do not want to revisit this issue in another 30 years wondering where we went wrong. It is time to take bold steps forward to support and finally institutionalize our constitutional and moral obligation to Indian Education.

Program Foundation Standard

Incorporate in all curricular programs the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and other cultural groups.

Accreditation Standards

10.55.603 Curriculum Development and Assessment

(2) For content and performance standards in all program areas, the school district shall:

(d) Review curricula to ensure the inclusion of the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians

10.55.701 Board of Trustees

(3) Each school district shall have in writing and available to staff and public:

(n) A policy that incorporates the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians that is aligned with district educational goals.

10.55.803 Learner Access

(2) In developing curricula in all program areas, the board of trustees shall consider ways to:

(b) Take into account individual and cultural diversity and differences among learners. Cultural and language differences should be viewed as valuable and enriching resources taking into account the unique needs of American Indian students and other minority groups;

(c) Develop an understanding of the values and contributions of Montana's American Indians for all students;

(d) Provide learning resources that are culturally relevant, inclusive and current;

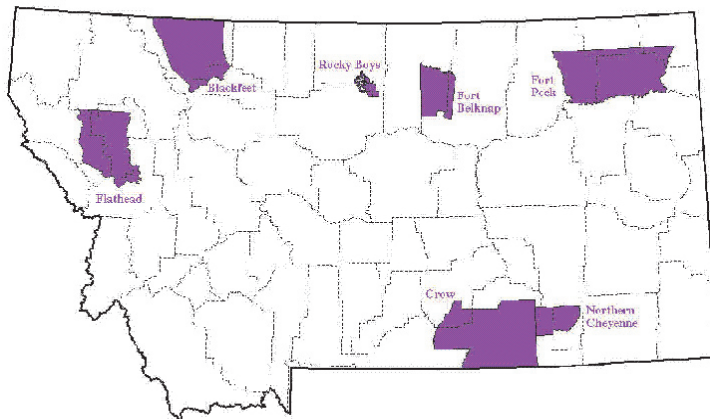
(h) Provide books and materials that reflect authentic historical and contemporary portrayals of American Indians.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT MONTANA INDIANS

“CONCEPTS EVERY MONTANA EDUCATOR SHOULD KNOW ABOUT AMERICAN INDIANS”

Tribal histories and contemporary tribal members, governments and nations have shaped and are shaping the social and political face of Montana. An educated and contemporary Montana citizen has basic knowledge of these histories and Montana tribes.

- A. There is great diversity among the 12 tribal Nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.



An Indian reservation is a land base that a tribe reserved for itself when it relinquished its other land areas to the United States through treaties.

RESERVATIONS:

Flathead
Blackfeet
Rocky Boy's
Fort Belknap
Fort Peck
Northern Cheyenne
Crow

TRIBAL GROUPS:

Salish, Kootenai, Pend'Oreille
Blackfeet
Chippewa, Cree
Gros Ventre, Assiniboine
Sioux, Assiniboine
Northern Cheyenne
Crow

The Little Shell Chippewa Tribe is without a reservation or land base and members live in various parts of Montana.

About 35 percent of Montana's Indian population do not live on reservations and reside in the small communities or urban areas of Montana. The individual history and circumstances of Montana's urban Indian people are as diverse as the people themselves.

Currently, most Montana Indian students attend public schools across the state. There are only two tribally controlled schools in Montana. Each reservation also has its own tribally controlled community college.

- B. There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined and redefined by many entities, organizations and people. There is a continuum of Indian identity ranging from assimilated to traditional and is unique to each individual. There is no generic American Indian.**

Identity is an issue with which human beings struggle throughout their lifetime. Questions of “Who am I?” and “How do I fit in?” are universal questions of the human condition. Schools have historically been a place for students to explore their identity. However, when the culture of students’ homes and communities are not evident in school, finding a way to belong within that system is more difficult and can lead to frustration. Educators need to ensure that each student has an opportunity to feel included in the classroom either through materials or pedagogical practices.

Even larger issues of “Who is an Indian/Tribal Member?” are questions among Indian people themselves. The federal, state and tribal governments may all have their own definition for who is a member. As a general principle an Indian is a person who is of some degree Indian blood and is recognized as an Indian by a tribe/village and/or the United States. There exists no universally accepted rule for establishing a person’s identity as an Indian. The criteria for tribal membership differs from one tribe to the next. To determine a particular tribe’s criteria, one must contact that tribe directly. For its own purposes, the Bureau of the Census counts anyone an Indian who declares to be such (from Native American Rights Fund—www.narf.org).

Amidst all of these issues, educators must remember that Indian students come to school with a variety of backgrounds. They have differences of skin color, dress, and behavior; and there may be deeper and subtler differences of values and of ways of being and learning.

A continuum exists between traditional and nontraditional American Indian students. And within the continuum there are those who show characteristics of American Indian ways of being and belief, and those who show themselves to be American Indian yet do not have what some people might at first see as American Indian behavior and appearance.

What is important is that all humans be allowed feelings of integrity and pride connected with who they are, with whom they identify. Respecting what others value and do is a way to help them develop both the self-esteem and the feelings of integrity that will enhance their learning.

It should also be noted that there is not a single American Indian learning style, nor is there a group of several styles of learning that fits all American Indians, either as individuals or tribal groups. Teachers should recognize that there are a variety of learning styles and adapt their teaching methods to the individual learner. At the same time teachers should build on and expand the individual student’s approach to learning. However, recognizing that teachers must use a variety of teaching methods to meet individual learning styles does not mean that culture doesn’t have an influence on learning styles. The differences in the cultures of home and school certainly impact the teaching-learning process. Classrooms need to integrate culture into the curriculum to blur the boundaries between home and school. Schools need to become a part of, rather than apart

from, the communities in which they serve (from *Collected Wisdom: American Indian Education* by Linda Miller, Cleary and Thomas D. Peacock).

C. Each tribe has their own oral history beginning with their genesis that is as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the “discovery” of North America.

Each tribe has a history that can be traced to the beginning of time. Many of these histories will be told only orally as they have been passed down through generations. These histories are as valid as any other mythology or belief. Some tribes may only tell certain stories during certain times of the year and this knowledge should be respected in classrooms.

Many tribal histories place their people in their current traditional lands in Montana. Be cognizant of this issue when teaching about “the history of mankind,” in particular, about the Bering Strait Theory. The use of revisionist history is a positive teaching tool to look at various perspectives of historical occurrences and questioning the idea of who wrote history and how that viewpoint plays out in today’s society.

D. The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

American Indian languages, cultures, and traditions are alive and well throughout Indian country. Although, in some aspects, much of the culture has changed, this does not mean that culture is dead it has only become transformed through a process of acculturation. Indigenous languages are still spoken, sacred songs are still sung, and rituals are still performed. It is not important for us to understand all of the complexities of modern day, contemporary American Indian culture but it is important that we do have an understanding and awareness that these cultures exist and influence much of the thinking and practice of American Indians today.

These histories and traditions may be private, to be used and understood only by members of that particular tribe. Educators should be aware of this issue when asking students about their histories, ceremonies and stories.

Educators should also be consistent with policies surrounding “religious/spiritual activities” and ensure that Native traditions and spirituality are on par with other religious traditions and spirituality.

E. Reservations are land that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties and was not “given” to them. The principle that land should be acquired from the Indians only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions:

- I. That both parties to treaties were sovereign powers.*
- II. That Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land.*
- III. That acquisition of Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists (from Vine Deloria).*

Indian Nations located in Montana Territory prior to the passage of the Montana Constitution in 1889, held large land bases as negotiated through their treaties with the United States. The

treaties assigned tribes to certain areas and obligated them to respect the land of their neighbors. However, the mining invasions of the 1860s disrupted these areas as miners and others rushed into the prime gold fields that often lay along or within the designated tribal lands. The new inhabitants demanded federal protection; this began the garrisoning of Montana and the eventual relocation of the tribes to smaller and smaller reserves.

The federal government and the Montana citizens did not understand the lifestyles of Montana's Indian tribes and, therefore, dealt with them from the expectations and from the non-Indian point of view. However, the federal government did understand that these tribal groups were sovereign nations and they needed to enter into treaty negotiations with them.

- F. There were many federal policies put into place throughout American history that have impacted Indian people and shape who they are today. Much of Indian history can be related through several major federal policy periods:**

Examples:

- 1. Colonization Period*
- 2. Treaty Period*
- 3. Allotment Period*
- 4. Boarding School Period*
- 5. Tribal Reorganization*
- 6. Termination*
- 7. Self-determination*

Public schools began to operate on Indian reservations in Montana in the early 1900s. Although public schools were originally opened to meet the educational needs of non-Indian children residing on Indian reservations, Indian students began to enroll almost from the beginning. The public schools provided an opportunity for Indian people to receive an education in their local communities. The curriculum and instruction in public schools was, and continues to be, designed to meet the standards of the state education system. The curriculum offered limited information on the local Indian culture, history and traditions of the local tribal groups, and it did not encourage participation from local tribal government officials in its decision-making policies. However, this trend is beginning to change as Indian people become empowered to lead and make decisions about their local schools. There are now Indian people involved in the system as teachers, administrators, and school board members who are cognizant of the fact that communities and schools must be linked together in order to improve educational outcomes for Indian students. (See the OPI publication [A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy](#).)

- G. History is a story and most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. Histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from an Indian perspective conflicts with what most of mainstream history tells us.**

Much of our history has been told from one perspective. It has been only recently that American Indians have begun to write about and retell history from an indigenous perspective.

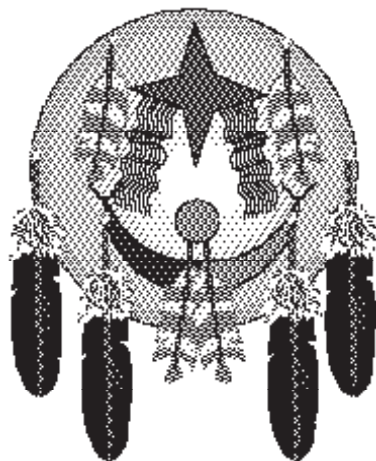
Books such as Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong expose the underlying bias that exists within much of our history curriculum by leaving certain voices out of the stories. In examining current curriculum content it is important to keep the following in mind:

Children's history books use terms such as "westward expansion" and "Manifest Destiny" to describe what would be more accurately called ethnic genocide. These books alternately portray Indians as "noble savages," "faithful Indian guides," or "sneaky savages" who lead "ambushes" and "massacres," while in contrast, cavalymen fight "brave battles." These books propagandize the "glory and honor" of taking land and oppressing native people for European purposes that are portrayed as holy and valid (James Loewen).

H. Under the American legal system, Indian tribes have sovereign powers separate and independent from the federal and state governments. The extent and breadth of tribal sovereignty is not the same for each tribe, however.

Before colonization, Indian tribes possessed complete sovereignty. However, given the governmental structure of the United States and the complex history of tribal-federal relations, tribes are now classified as domestic dependent nations. This means tribes have the power to define their own membership; structure and operate their tribal governments; regulate domestic relations; settle disputes; manage their property and resources; raise tax revenues; regulate businesses; and conduct relations with other governments. It also means that the federal government is obligated to protect tribal lands and resources; protect the tribe's right to self-government; and provide social, medical, educational and economic development services necessary for the survival and advancement of tribes.

A very important, but often unappreciated, point is that tribal sovereignty does not arise out of the United States government, congressional acts, executive orders, treaties or any other source outside the tribe. As Felix Cohen puts it, "perhaps the most basic principle of all Indian law... is that those powers which are lawfully vested in an Indian tribe are not, in general, delegated powers granted by expressed acts of Congress, but rather 'inherent powers of a limited sovereignty, which has never been extinguished.'" (from Native American Rights Fund— www.narf.org).



TRIBAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS

The following is a list of possible offices/individuals the user might contact for information.

Tribal Organization	Address/Telephone/Email
Blackfeet Tribe Tribal Education	PO Box 850 Browning, MT 59417 338-7538 Fax: 338-7483
Bureau of Indian Affairs Education	316 North 26th Street Billings, MT 59101 247-7953 Fax: 247-7965
Chippewa Cree/Rocky Boy Education Department	Stone Child College PO Box 1082 Box Elder, MT 59521 395-4269 ext 121 Fax: 395-4278
Confederated Salish/Kootenai Education Department	Box 278 Pablo, MT 59855 675-2700 x 1071 Fax: 675-2014
Crow Tribe Tribal Education	PO Box 250 Crow Agency, MT 59022 638-3712 Fax: 638-3764
Fort Peck Tribal Education	PO Box 1027 Poplar, MT 59255 768-5136 Fax: 768-3556
Ft Belknap Education Department	Rte 1 Box 66 Harlem, MT 59526
Ft. Belknap Education/ 477 Department	PO Box 66 Harlem, MT 59526 353-8362 Fax: 353-4567



Tribal Organization

Address/Telephone/Email

Little Shell Tribe

Box 1384
Great Falls, MT 59403
452-2892
Fax: 452-2982

Northern Cheyenne Tribal
Education

Box 307
Lame Deer, MT 59043
477-6602
Fax: 477-8150



BOOKS TO READ

ABOUT INDIAN EDUCATION

- Cajete, Gregory. Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education.
Offers a look at education from a Native perspective. Explains an indigenous form of education that could supplement or substitute for the current linear system of education.
- Cleary, Linda Miller and Peacock, Thomas D. Collected Wisdom: American Indian Education.
Offers an excellent background on teaching native students using both research and voices of teachers.
- Fedullo, Mick. Light of the Feather.
Fedullo, a non-Native tells of his teaching experiences with various tribal groups and the way those experiences caused him to drop his own stereotypes for more realistic images of Native people.
- Huff, Delores J. To Live Heroically: Institutional Racism and American Indian Education.
Examines American Indian education during the last century, comparing the tribal, mission, and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools and curriculums and the assumptions that each system made about the role that Indians should assume in society. It analyzes the relationship between the rise of institutional racism and the fall of public education in the United States using the history of American Indian education as a model.
- Slapin, Beverly and Doris Seale, Eds. Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children.
An invaluable resource for teachers at all levels. Includes essays, poems, reviews, and bibliographies of literature by and about Native people.
- Susag, Dorothea M. Roots and Branches: A Resource of Native American Literature - Themes, Lessons, and Bibliographies.
Offers teachers a great resource of Native American Literature to use at any level of teaching. Includes annotated bibliography and lesson plans.
- Swisher, Karen Gayton and Tippeconnic, John W. III. Next Steps: Research and Practice to Advance Indian Education.
A series of essays written by Native researchers that addresses facets of K-12 and post-secondary Native American education programs, including their history, legal aspects, curriculum, access, and achievement.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The following are available to educators **FREE OF CHARGE**. To obtain any of these resources, contact Indian Education Department, Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501, or call (406) 444-3013/444-3694. These are also available for download from OPI Web site: www.opi.mt.gov

1. **Directory of Indian Education Programs in Montana**, revised October, 2001, published by Montana Advisory Council for Indian Education and Office of Public Instruction.
2. **Evaluating American Indian Textbooks and Other Materials**, 1993, Revised 2002, developed by Murton L. McCluskey, Ed.D. Information and suggestions designed to help teachers better review and evaluate textbooks and other materials for stereotypes, inaccuracies, omissions, and bias about the American Indian.
3. **A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy**, 2001, by Stan Juneau, distributed by the Office of Public Instruction gives an overview to “spark interest ... to further research of what their history is and says.”
4. **Idea Book for Creating Lessons and Units About American Indians**, Revised 2002, distributed by the Office of Public Instruction. Collection of information and suggestions which are intended to be of use to the teacher in planning an Indian unit or Native American Day activities.
5. **Native American Literature Montana and Northcentral Regional Publications**, by Dorothea Susag.
6. **Your Guide to Understanding and Enjoying Pow Wows**, Revised 2002, by Murton L. McCluskey, Ed.D.
7. **Montana Indian Law-Related Education**, downloadable only from the OPI Web site.
8. www.nwpowwow.com





Linda McCulloch, Superintendent

Montana Office of Public Instruction
PO Box 202501
Helena, Montana 59620-2501
www.opi.mt.gov

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